

Characteristics of Effective String Project Directors

Effective String Project Directors Provide Instruction in:

- *How to perform an effective recruitment session*

The Director and the Master Teacher will know two or three scripts that they have found to be effective in getting young children excited about learning to play a stringed instrument. They will observe the student teachers as they rehearse their demonstrations and also ask for a report on the perceived outcomes at each school or community center. An effective demonstration will result in students from each school who are present at the beginner class organization meeting.

- *How to be an assistant*

Beginning String Project teachers may need guidance in how to be an effective assistant. They need to be vigilant, proactive, and unobtrusive. The effective String Project Director will arrange for the veteran teachers of the program to model this skill for new teachers and provide support as they master the necessary skills.

- *Lesson/class procedures*

Beginning teachers will need guidance on the accepted sequence of either a class or lesson. Lessons traditionally follow the sequence of scales, etudes, and pieces. Students in classes need to be tuned (or assisted while tuning), perform a warm-up, introduced to new skills, review previously taught skills, and a motivational piece at the close.

- *How to fill out report cards*

Grading may be different in a community program than in a traditional school setting. While there is a need for authentic assessment in both settings, teachers of students in a community program should be encouraged to use the most tactful words in describing the desired areas of growth. All items on the report card should be objective, observable, and measurable. It may be useful to use a numerical rating (1 to 5) versus letter grades as the latter carry emotional issues that may not be a desired part of a community program.

- *How to communicate with parents*

Most parents who are seeking instruction for their child in the String Project will be true partners in their child's musical education. Occasionally, even the most motivated student and/or parent may require objective feedback on what may be most helpful for the student's continued musical and educational growth. Student teachers should feel comfortable to ask assistance from the Director if they find themselves in an uncomfortable situation.

- *Checking for lesson plans, attendance charts*

Accountability is the name of the game in classrooms of the 21st century. This will be just as true for teachers of stringed instruments as for any other academic discipline. Beginning student teachers will need to be accountable for keeping lesson plans and monitoring student attendance. Effective String Project directors devise systems for monitoring these, either via email or periodic visits to the studio or classroom.

- *Provide feedback in lessons, classes, and rehearsals*

The String Project Director will visit studios and classrooms frequently. A teacher may require feedback on more effective pacing, more specific feedback, and the need to break down large skills into small, digestible chunks. This feedback is most effective if delivered within a day or two of the lesson in question and is succinct and direct.

Effective String Project Directors are Effective Organizers:

- *Collecting demographic data*

Up-to-date demographic data is essential for grant applications. It will also be essential in clarifying the role of this innovative community program within the context of the university. Effective String Project Directors will be aware of the composition of the students/families: gender, race, income bracket, numbers of parents in the household, and numbers of children in the family.

- *Payroll—formulating spreadsheet with pay amounts, collecting appropriate paperwork*

Effective String Project Directors will ensure the Master Teacher and student teachers are promptly receiving compensation for the varied duties required of their role. They may choose to utilize either a spreadsheet or budget planning software to assist in this task. They will also need to collect the required paperwork from the various levels of employees.

- *Planning meetings*

Beginning of the year meetings involve planning for recruitment, welcoming returning students, and organizing the beginning class students. Effective String Project teachers will utilize the talents and skills of the Master Teacher and veteran student teachers in planning these events. Weekly meetings will disseminate logistical and pedagogical information.

- *Concert planning*

String Project Directors will want to highlight the achievement of both children and student teachers in a showcase performance. These performances require detailed logistical planning in order to present a polished image to the parents and community.

- *Calendar of events*

Busy families will need to know the year's events before enrolling their children. Effective String Project Directors will have the calendar events in place prior to the beginning of the academic year and will distribute it at beginning of the year meetings.

- *Communicating with staff via email*

The convenience of email is a wonderful tool in communication. Effective String Project Directors will take care to send email at least two days in advance of a meeting change or deadline for information.

Effective String Project Directors Serve as a Liaison between the Community and the University:

- *Have a knowledge of university procedures*

Effective String Project Directors will know how to navigate the bureaucratic requirements of the institution.

- *Understand the necessity of working well with university support personnel*

The Effective String Project Director will make friends and have cordial relationships with university staff. University staff is often responsible for room scheduling, equipment needs, and answering phone calls on behalf of the program.

Effective String Project Directors are Good Fundraisers and Public Relations People:

The Effective String Project Director will:

- Become a strong and effective fund-raising advocate for the program
- Collaborate with university fundraisers to solicit from donors
- Lead efforts to promote the program to community leaders
- Contact alumni for gifts, either monetary or in-kind
- Stay alert and open to all possible forms of contributions, such as free instrument rentals and gifts of other necessary equipment
- Become skilled in the art of writing new grants